

64A 2382 & 30
0001
Communist China
~~SECRET~~
BRIEF

SNIE 13-3-61: CHINESE COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES
AND INTENTIONS IN THE FAR EAST

This Special National Intelligence Estimate was approved by the United States Intelligence Board on 30 November 1961. Significant judgments of this Estimate are as follows:

Communist China almost certainly does not intend to attempt the open military conquest of any other Far Eastern country during the period of this estimate. Communist China's leaders believe that they can eventually achieve their objectives in the area at far less cost and risk through the techniques of Communist political warfare. When Peiping believes the circumstances are right, it will endeavor to supplement the more conventional forms of political warfare with guerrilla and terrorist action by indigenous forces, supported and guided by Peiping.

In any case, the Communist Chinese will seize every opportunity to undermine U.S. standing and to generate anti-American feeling in the Far East. They will strive to promote discontent and instability in the pro-Western countries of the area.

• Peiping has no compunctions about the open use of its military forces to reconquer areas it considers to be within the rightful historic boundaries of China. It will continue its refusal to renounce the use of force for the seizure of Taiwan and the offshore islands, but we believe that concern over retaliation by the U.S. will deter it from attempting a military conquest of Taiwan or the offshore islands during at least the period of this estimate. However, the Chinese might undertake limited military action in the Strait area to test Nationalist Chinese defenses and to probe U.S. determination or to call world attention to what it terms the danger to peace caused by the U.S. occupation of a part of China's territory.

Peiping's reluctance to launch a military invasion in the Far East will almost certainly not prevent it from reacting vigorously to any U.S. or SEATO action which Peiping believed threatened its security. For example, if SEATO (or U.S. armed forces alone) came to the defense of Laos or South Vietnam, Peiping's reaction would probably be to increase its aid to the Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese while deploying substantial Chinese regular forces along its own southern border. In the more extreme

~~SECRET~~

EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC REGRADING;
DOD DIR 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

CFA

~~SECRET~~
APPROVED FOR RELEASE

JAN 1999

2 17964/61
Attch 6

64A2382 #30

~~SECRET~~

situation where a SEATO or U.S. action constituted a threat to North Vietnam which the North Vietnamese forces could not counter, the Chinese would almost certainly intervene overtly with their own forces; should such action appear to threaten the Communist position in northern Laos the Chinese Communists would probably intervene overtly with their own forces.

If Sino-Soviet relations were to deteriorate, for example to the present level of Albanian-Soviet relations, Communist China's military capabilities would be somewhat reduced and Peiping would have much less confidence that it could count on the Soviet nuclear umbrella. Perhaps most important, such an open Sino-Soviet break would also reduce Communist China's capabilities for political warfare, at least in the short run. The very foundations of communism would be shaken and Sino-Soviet rivalry for dominant influence in the other Communist parties of Asia would have a disruptive effect on these parties and would substantially weaken them as instruments of subversion for the time being.

~~SECRET~~